Garib Rath trains

†*168. SHRI AMIR ALAM KHAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the purpose of Government behind running the Garib Rath Express trains;

(b) whether it is a fact that these trains are not even able to recover their operational cost due to thousands of seats remaining unoccupied;

(c) the average number of passengers travelling by Garib Raths every month;

(d) the methodology being adopted by Government to compensate the revenue loss caused due to unoccupied seats;

(e) the incentives being given by Government to encourage passengers for travelling by Garib Raths; and

(f) whether Government are still considering to start two more 'Garib Raths' despite incurring loss?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI LALU PRASAD): (a) To provide afforedable air-conditioned service to passengers to long distance trains.

(b) No, Sir. However, train-wise profitability is not maintained by the Indian Railways.

(c) Approximately 30,000.

(d) Does not arise. However, suitable reduction/augmentation of coaches in trains is a regular exercise being done by Indian Railways.

(e) Nil, Sir. However, "Garib Rath" concept is itself is the incentive with low AC fare.

(f) Already introduced.

Electronic industries contamainating the rivers

*169. DR. MAM. RAMASWAMY Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a survey conducted by Green Peace has revealed that some of the biggest brands in electronics industries and their suppliers

†Onginal notice of the question was received in Hindi

are contaminating rivers and underground wells with a wide range of hazardous chemicals;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is also a fact that some countries including China are taking steps to enforce a phase out of these toxic chemicals; and

(d) if so, the steps taken by Government to minimize the environmental pollution caused by e-waste?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Greenpeace had carried out a study on the environmental pollution during manufacturing of electronic products in China, Thailand, Philippines and Mexico and no such study was done for India. This study was an assessment on pollution due to the use of some of the hazardous chemicals in the manufacture of electronic products in these countries. The study reveals some contamination of water bodies which, however, could not be attributed fully to the untis manufacturing electronic products located in these countries the vicinity.

(C) The European Union is reported to have issued a directive "on the restriction of the use of certain hazardous substances in electrical and electronic equipment" which has come into force with effect from 1 July 2006, imposing restrictions on the use of lead, mercury, cadmium, hexavalent chromium, polybrominated bibhenyles (PBB) and polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDE) in electronic and electrical equipment.

(D) The Government of India has taken the following steps to minimize the pollution caused by e-waste:

(1) The Hazardous Wastes (Management and Handling) Rules, 1989 as amended in 2000 and 2003 includes e-waste.These rules regulate the generation, collection, storage, treatment, disposal, export and import of all hazardous wastes.

(2) The Department of Information Technology, Ministryof Communication and Information Technology, Government of India, has taken steps to promote adoptioon of cleaner technologies and to motivate the electronics industry to minimize generation of waste. They have also published a comprehensive technical guide on 'Environment

Management for Information Technology Industry in India' in 2004 for wide circulation to electronics industry.

(3) The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) has condcuted a study on the assessment of electrical and electronic waste generation and have also undertaken the task on preparation of a 'Guidelines Document for Environmnetally Sound Recycling of E-Waste' for the State Pollution Control Boards and Pollution Control Committees of the Union Territories as well as the industries.

(4) Measures have also been initiated to create awareness among the electronic industry for the adoption on cleaner production technologies and minimization hazardous waste generation.

Protection of crops from fungal disease

†*170. SHRI SATYAVRAT HATURVEDI:
SHRI MOTILAL VORA:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the fact that coming out from Africa a type of fungus harming the wheat crop has reached Yemen crossing the Red Sea and it may reach India in the coming three-four years;

(b) if so, what measures Government are taking to protect the wheat crop from this fungus; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) The African race of stem rust fungus of wheat is not reported in India. Government is aware that a new race of stem rust of wheat (Ug 99) with likely adverse effect on wheat crop has been traced in Kenya and Yemen. The opinion of the experts of the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Centre (CIMMYT), Mexico is that the effect, speed and the route of the movement of the fungus is unpredictable in near future. Therefore, it is only an apprehension that the fungus may reach India is the coming three or four years.

†Onginal notice of the question was received in Hindi